

### **31st Separate Armored Bde.**

## **M1A1, Bradley Modernization Highlight Alabama Unit's Training Year**

The 31st Separate Armored Brigade, headquartered at Northport, Alabama, fielded several new weapon systems this year and met most of the training requirements of an enhanced brigade while spending 25 percent less than an enhanced brigade's budget and doing without the typical enhanced brigade's complement of full-time support personnel.

The brigade had quite a year if only for all of the new weapons systems it fielded. Major end items new to our soldiers were the M1A1, along with the Bradley Fighting Vehicle, the 120mm mortar, and the Palletized Loading System.

The 31st's six battalions include 1-167 Infantry, 1-131 and 1-152 Armor, 1-117 FA, the 31st Support Battalion, and — as of this year — the 145th Engineer Battalion, which was added to the task organization in August. The brigade also includes two separate companies, Troop E Cav and HHC HQ.

The infantry battalion transitioned to the Bradley, providing new equipment training (NET) for 58 crews and 23 alternate crews, while also fielding the 120mm mortar. In April, the unit conducted Mobile Conduct of Fire Training (MCOFT) at Pelham Range in Anniston, Alabama. The two armor battalions fielded the M1A1 and qualified on Table

VIII, with 1-131 shooting at Camp Shelby, Miss. and 1-152 at Eglin AFB, Fla. Both unit's mortar platoons also transitioned from 4.2" mortars to the much more capable 120mm mortar. The 1-152 also conducted close combat training at Fort Knox.

Troop E Cav was part of the same M1A1 fielding as the rest of the brigade and shot TT VIII at Elgin AFB, while 13 crews completed Bradley NET at Camp Shelby. The 1-117 FA Bn. completed NET on the Interim Fire Support Automated System, fielded the PLS, and completed Tables III through V. The brigade's new addition, the 1-145 Engineers, spent annual training in MOS qualification after joining the brigade.

Subunits also supported several overseas commitments. The 31st Support Bn., which supported the brigade's year-round training missions, also supported the CMTC at Hohenfels, Germany, while the HHC's MP platoon supported a mission in Panama.

Other activities included Stinger qualification for the ADA section at Fort Stewart, Ga., support of a 5th Corps ODT, a BCBST at Fort Leavenworth, Kan., and a BBX at Camp Shelby.

*(Information for this report came from CPT Danny Higdon.)*